St. Paul's *preaching* Christ, *designed to promote the* Knowledge *and* Practice *of* RELIGION.

A

SERMON,

PREACH'D AT THE

PROVINCIAL MEETING

OF THE

Lancaſhire Miniſters

AT

MANCHESTER,

May 8. 1744.

By *JAMES DAYE.*

Publiſhed at the Requeſt of ſeveral Gentlemen *preſent, both* Miniſters *and others.*

MANCHESTER:

Printed by R. WHITWORTH, Bookſeller; and ſold by B. COWSE, *Pater-noſter-row,* LONDON MDCCXLIV.

Col. i, 28.

Whom we preach, warning every Man and teaching every Man in all Wiſdom; that we may preſent every Man perfect in CHRIST JESUS.

I Suppoſe it will be eaſily granted, that the great End of the Supreme Being, in the Exerciſe of his Glorious Perfections, is always the Happineſs of his Creatures, and the greateſt Good of the Univerſe. If this be the fitteſt End for the Author of Nature, and the Father of intelligent Beings, to propoſe, and he be acknowledged to chuſe and employ the beſt Methods for attaining this End; *this* may be called the Perfection of *Divine* Wiſdom. And, ſo far as rational Creatures propoſe the ſame End, *viz.* the Good and Happineſs of themſelves, and the reſt of the World, and take thoſe Meaſures, which are moſt ſuitable and conducive to that End; *this* is *their* Wiſdom, and this Wiſdom is, in all the Extent of it, *Religion*; and ſo the Scriptures juſtly call it.

Now, if God, in Compaſſion to the Weakneſs and Prejudices of Mankind, and a Biaſs of wrong Affections, which has render'd them leſs able to diſcover the great End of their Beings, and to take the juſteſt Methods of purſuing it, hath granted them Information and Direction in both theſe reſpects, the Obſervation of which we call *Religion*; this muſt be accounted an effectual Rule of Happineſs to us; and therefore moſt truly and properly *Philoſophy*, or the higheſt *Wiſdom*.

St. Paul was an eminent Maſter and Teacher of this *Wiſdom*; which God at firſt revealed to the World by his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and by him and his Spirit to his Apoſtles and Prophets, to be by them communicated to all Men; that all might be conducted thereby to Happineſs, who were willing to embrace the Method propoſed. And it was the peculiar Office of St. Paul, to declare this Method of attaining Happineſs to the Gentiles: For he tells the Coloſſians, that *he was made a Miniſter of the Church* of Chriſt, *according to the Diſpenſation*, the Purpoſe, or Appointment *of God*, *which* was *given*, or communicated to him *for* the *Gentiles*; i. e. to acquaint them with the Doctrines of the Goſpel.

Col. i. 25.

ver. 27. *To whom*, that is, the Gentiles, *God would make known what is the Riches of the Glory*

of

of this Myſtery among the Gentiles; which is Chriſt in you, the Hope of Glory. That the *Gentiles* were to be favoured with ſuch a Priviledge, was before that Time a Myſtery; and the Jews did not expect, that *they* were to be admitted as the People of God: But now this Doctrine was plainly revealed by St. Paul; who *preached him*, by whom they had the *Hopes* of the Favour of God, and *eternal Life. Whom we preach, warning every Man, and teaching every Man in all Wiſdom; that we may preſent every Man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus.* Theſe Words I would endeavour to explain and illuſtrate in the following Manner.

I. I would enquire into the Meaning of the Expreſſion, *Preaching Chriſt*, both in the Text, and other Places, where it occurs in the New Teſtament.

II. I would conſider the Practice of the Apoſtle in *Preaching Chriſt*, deſcribed here by himſelf; who acted according to that ſure Rule, which thoſe ought to follow, who would acquaint themſelves, or others, with the Wiſdom of God in the Goſpel of his Son.

III. I would conſider the great End, which ſhould be always obſerved in publiſhing this Wiſdom to the World. And

IV. Pro-

IV. Propoſe ſuch particular Uſes, as ſeem principally to ariſe from theſe Conſiderations, for a practical Improvement of the Subject.

I. I would inquire into the Meaning of the Expreſſion, *Preaching Chriſt*, as it occurs in the Text, and other Places of Scripture. *Whom we Preach:* This Phraſe is often uſed, or ſomething equivalent to it, upon different Occaſions.

At the firſt preaching of the Goſpel, the chief Point, to be gain'd from the Jews, was, that Jeſus was the Meſſiah: which, if it was once ſatisfactorily made out, was ſufficient to give Weight and Authority to all the Chriſtian Doctrine. And therefore, in all Diſputes with the Jews, this being the Point in Controverſy, they that preached the Goſpel, were ſaid to preach Chriſt.
Acts 5. 42. Thus the Apoſtles are ſaid, *daily in the Temple and in every Houſe* continually *to teach and preach Jeſus Chriſt.* That is,
Acts 9. 20. that he was the Son of God, or the Meſſiah. As Saul after his Converſion, ſtraightway preached Chriſt in the Synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

Afterwards, when the Goſpel was preached to the Gentiles, the Jewiſh Chriſtians, being zealous for the Law of Moſes, and ſo prejudiced in favour of the ceremonial

remonial Law, that they could not be brought to believe it was abrogated by the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, inſiſted upon the Gentiles being circumciſed, and admitting the Rituals of the Jewiſh Law; withal recommending the Traditions of the Elders. And whereſoever the Chriſtian Religion was planted among the Gentiles, theſe buſy People came, and diſturbed them with their Scruples; telling them, they could not be ſaved, if they were not circumciſed, and did not keep the Law of Moſes. And St. Paul's Epiſtles to the ſeveral Churches were writ, chiefly, to defend the Liberty of Chriſtians againſt thoſe, who endeavoured to bring them into Bondage to the Law. And this was *preaching Chriſt*, in Oppoſition to thoſe Diſturbers, who, pretending to be the Miniſters of *Chriſt*, preached *Moſes and the Law*. Thus St. Paul concludes his Epiſtle to the Romans. *To him that is of Power to ſtabliſh you according to my Goſpel, and* the preaching of Jeſus Chriſt *according to the Revelation of the Myſtery which was kept ſecret ſince the World began, but now is made manifeſt*, (That is, the Goodneſs of God, in admitting the Gentiles to the Privileges of Chriſtianity without the Works of the Law was before a Myſtery, but now,) *by* explaining *the Scriptures of the Prophets, according to the Command-*

Rom. xvi. 26. 27.

ment

ment of the everlaſting God, made known to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith; that is, the *Faith of Chriſt*, and not the *Works of the Law.*

We alſo find, that *the Defence of the Goſpel*, by proving the divine Authority of Chriſt, to direct Men in the Way of Salvation, and by removing all Objections againſt it, is called *preaching Chriſt.* Particularly this Expreſſion is uſed, for the Apoſtle's declaring and proving our Lord's Reſurrection from the Dead: *If* Chriſt be preached, *that he roſe from the Dead:* And for removing the Reproach of his Death, and the Reflections that were caſt upon him, as a crucified Malefactor. Thus St. Paul ſpeaks to the Corinthians. *But we* preach Chriſt *crucified*, that, though he be looked upon by *the Jews* as *a ſtumbling Block*, and by *the Greeks*, as *Fooliſhneſs*; yet *unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Chriſt the Power of God* (being crucified in *Weakneſs*, but raiſed in *Power*; to be the Head over all Things to his Church, and to give eternal Life to thoſe that believe and obey the Goſpel) *and the Wiſdom of God.* Whoſe Doctrine is true Wiſdom, and the moſt compleat Direction for Happineſs and Heaven.

i. Cor. xv. 12.

i. Cor. i. 23. 24.

Again;

Again; the Apoſtles ſpeak of their *preaching Chriſt*, to ſhew, that they did not preach *themſelves*, or advance any thing by their own Authority, as the judaizing Chriſtians did. Thus St. Paul tells the Corinthians, *For we* preach *not ourſelves, but* Chriſt Jeſus the Lord; *and* ourſelves *your Servants for Jeſus ſake.* They did not ſet up themſelves as the Heads of Parties; ſeek a great Name, and their own Glory; nor Riches, and Intereſt in the World. The judaizing Teachers had this View; and therefore their preaching was *preaching* themſelves: But St. Paul was intirely diſintereſted, and preached only what he had received from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. ii. Cor. iv. 5.

Laſtly, *preaching Chriſt*, in the Text, and other Places of the New Teſtament, ſignifies the whole Chriſtian Doctrine, and eſpecially *the moſt important Points* of it; as practical Religion, moral Virtues, and thoſe Qualities of a ſpiritual Nature, which are the moſt ſuitable to anſwer the great Ends of Religion, in fitting Men for Heaven and eternal Life. It alſo takes in *all the Motives* and Encouragements to a good Life, which the Doctrines of Chriſtianity contain. This we learn from the Whole of the Apoſtle's Doctrine; who continually recommends Holineſs of Life and a virtuous Diſpoſition of Mind. The Text plainly

imports this: *Whom we preach.* In what Manner did the Apoſtle *preach Chriſt?* The following Words reſolve the Queſtion. *Warning every Man, and teaching every Man in all Wiſdom.* In another Place he
Eph. iv. 20. ſays: *But ye have not ſo learned Chriſt.* i. e. from the Apoſtle's preaching. He is ſpeaking of the Wickedneſs and Immoralities of the Gentiles; and tells them, that by the Inſtructions of the Goſpel, which they had learnt from the Apoſtle's
ver. 21. preaching Chriſt, *they had heard Chriſt, and been taught by him, as the Truth is in*
ver. 22. *Jeſus*, to *put off concerning the former Converſation*, while they were Gentiles, *the old Man*; their former vicious Principles; *which is corrupt according to the deceitful*
ver. 24. *Luſts*; and to *put on the new Man*, the Chriſtian Temper and Practice, *which after God is created in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs.* And then he proceeds to recommend ſeveral Branches of the Chriſtian Temper, and lay down the Characters of a holy Life.

Theſe are all the Significations of the Phraſe, *preaching Chriſt*, as far, at leaſt, as they occur to me, which are to be found in the New Teſtament. Analagous to which, defending the Authority of Chriſt, and the Truth of Chriſtianity, againſt thoſe who deny a Revelation, or thoſe who join Human

man Authority with that of Chriſt, and ſet up againſt the Scriptures, or above them, their own Decrees and Canons, putting an arbitrary Senſe upon the Scriptures, and inventing Articles of Faith to bind the Conſcience; I ſay, defending the Authority of Chriſt, and vindicating Chriſtian Liberty againſt all ſuch Impoſitions, may with Propriety enough be called *preaching Chriſt*: But preaching Chriſt can never be, to ſet up his *Name* againſt his own *Religion*; and by a Multitude of Abſurdities, which commonly paſs under that Appellation, to exclude, in a Manner, the moſt important Part of a Miniſter's Work, if not his whole Buſineſs; which is to ſhew the Neceſſity of a virtuous Life, and a Temper conformable to the glorious Expectations of Chriſtians.

I would be far from condemning any Man for his Opinions, and from entertaining uncharitable Thoughts of thoſe, who impute our Sins and our Guilt to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; or who ſubſtitute the perſonal Righteouſneſs of Chriſt inſtead of that which he taught and recommended to the World, from his own great Example, for our Practice and Imitation; and teach Men, (at leaſt in the manifeſt Tendency of their Doctrine, though, I would hope, undeſignedly by themſelves,) that a ſtrong Fancy, that what *Chriſt* did, will be ac-

cepted of God, as if done by *themſelves*, will be a powerful and prevailing Charm, to ſecure them from all the dire Effects of a vicious Life, and of the greateſt Deficiency of that Diſpoſition, which is neceſſary for the Perfection and Enjoyment of God above; while their *own Righteouſneſs*, as they love to ſpeak, *is but as filthy Rags*: For Men muſt retain their own Opinions, till they can ſee the force of Reaſon and Argument, ſtrong enough to convince them of what is wrong in their Sentiments: But for Men to call SUCH NOTIONS, which are peculiar to themſelves, *preaching Chriſt*, as if nothing elſe did belong to Chriſtianity; and in Oppoſition to thoſe, who, by the Precepts and Example of Chriſt, and all the Motives of Religion, recommend a Spiritual and Divine Temper of Mind, and the moſt excellent Practice; as if ſuch were not worthy to be heard, or regarded and hardly to be accounted Chriſtians: Surely this is rather preaching *themſelves*, than *Chriſt*. And indeed it is a very likely Method, to gain the Eſteem of the ignorant, the thoughtleſs, and vicious Part of Mankind; and is a moſt comfortable Doctrine to him, who is reſolved to be a wicked Man, and ſo a fit and notable Engine for Prieſtcraft to carry on it's ſelfiſh Ends. But

II. I would conſider the Account, which St. Paul in the Text gives of his own *preaching Chriſt*, as worthy of the Regard and Imitation of all thoſe; who would acquaint themſelves, or others, with the *Wiſdom* of God in the Goſpel of his Son. *Warning every Man and teaching every Man in all Wiſdom.* We have here

The Apoſtle's Practice in preaching Chriſt, and

The Character of the Doctrine he taught.

I. St. Paul's conſtant Practice in preaching Chriſt. *Warning every Man and teaching every Man.*

He gave Men faithful Warning from Heaven, as one that knew the *Terrors of the Lord*, and was well acquainted with *his Will.* He warned them of their Danger, letting them know, that *God had appointed a Day to judge the World in Righteouſneſs by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; when he would *render to every Man according to his Deeds*; and that their future Condition would be determined according to the Prevalence of virtuous or vicious Principles upon their Minds; and that nothing, but the moſt excellent Habits of Rectitude, could be a ſuitable Qualification for eternal Life and Happineſs—That *the Wrath*

Acts. xvii 31.

Rom. ii. 6.

of

Rom. i. 18. Rom. ii. 7. 8. 9. *of God is revealed againſt all Ungodlineſs and Unrighteouſneſs of Men*; and that God will confer *eternal Life* only upon them, *who by patient Continuance in Well-doing, ſeek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality*; but *render Indignation and Wrath unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteouſneſs*; *Tribulation and Anguiſh upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil, to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Gentile.*

And he did not only warn them of their *Danger*, but alſo uſed the beſt Methods to *convince* them of their *Miſtakes*, and *correct* their *falſe Notions:* For this Senſe the Original Word, *nouthetountes*, often carries. He ſhewed them their Faults; and Col. iii. 6. what thoſe Things were, for which *the Wrath of God cometh upon the Chilren of Diſobedience.* He told the Jews of the Vanity of truſting in national Privileges, and outward Obſervances, to atone for a criminal Life, and a Heart without the Love of God or Man; and he told the Gentiles, that now God would no longer excuſe them for their *Ignorance* of his Will; ſince he had moſt clearly revealed it to them; but *all Men every where were commanded to repent*, to *turn to God from Idols, and ſerve the living and true God.* Acts xvii 30.

Thus

Thus the Apoſtle gave *Warning* to Men, and in the ſame Manner ſhould *Chriſtians warn themſelves* and *one another*, learn *themſelves*, and teach *one another* the Unhappineſs of that Condition, which can only be avoided by the beſt Principles, the beſt Affections of the Mind, and the beſt Practice. Nothing is more reaſonable, than this Declaration of the Goſpel of Chriſt; *the Unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God*: But *Opinions* do not belong to this *Unrighteouſneſs*, unleſs they proceed from immoral Principles, and ſo lead to a bad Practice. The Buſineſs of Miniſters then, is not to deal out their Anathema's and Curſes againſt Opinions, or to alarm People with the Apprehenſions of Damnation for an *unſound Faith*; but to warn them againſt a wicked Temper, and a bad Life; and to ſhew them the Abſurdity of truſting in the Formalities of Religion, and thinking it ſufficient to compliment God with a blind Obedience to all that the Clergy of their Party ſhall command them to profeſs, as their Faith, when they have pronounced it to be *ſound Doctrine*, *Orthodox*, *or Truth*; and laying the whole Streſs of their Dependendance for Salvation upon *the true Church*, *a right Belief*, *expenſive Charities*, *Prayers*, *attending on the publick Solemnities of Religion*, &c. inſtead of actual Repentance, and the Practice

1. Cor. vi. 9.

Mat. xxiii. 23. Practice of *the weightier Matters of the Law* of God, as our Bleſſed Saviour calls the great Duties of Morality; inſtancing in *Judgment*, or Righteouſneſs; *Mercy*, or Goodneſs, and univerſal Charity; and *Faith*, or Faithfulneſs, and Sincerity. For, what are ſome petty Circumſtances in Religion to the Temper of the Mind, and the real Character, which God, the righteous Judge, who cannot be impoſed upon by ſuch Inventions, will look upon, at laſt, juſt as it is? And beſides, ſhould it be allowed, that, for ſuch trivial Conſiderations, (ſuch they are, compared with thoſe Excellencies, which compoſe a Character fit for Heaven, and which it is the great Deſign of Religion to promote) God will acquit the Guilty; yet their own ſettled Diſpoſition, abounding with the Principles of Unhappineſs, would not ſuffer them to be ever the more ſecure of Bleſſedneſs; ſince a bad Man, even in Heaven itſelf, muſt be miſerable.

Again, St. Paul did not only warn, but teach Men. He gave a full Account of Chriſtianity; inſtructed Men in the plain Truths of Religion, and the great and important Duties of it. He, and the other Apoſtles, taught, that there is but one God; that this God loves his Creatures, ſeeks, and delights in their Happineſs; that

he

he is to be worſhipped not by the Inventions of Men, but by the Devotion of a pure Heart, and by a circumſpect Life; that *he has ſent his Son into the World, not to condemn, but to ſave the World*; that upon his becoming a Preacher of Righteouſneſs, and living a Divine Life before the Eyes of Men, being obedient to his heavenly Father, and dying for us according to the Will of God, he might be the Saviour of all thoſe, *whom God has given him*, and confer eternal Life upon them: And *God has given him* all them, that believe on him, and are obedient to the Rules of Happineſs laid down by him. Our bleſſed Lord and his Apoſtles alſo taught, that there is another Life after this, to which Men ſhall be raiſed at the coming of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; that he ſhall judge Mankind at his Coming, and appoint to all their proper Situation according to their improved Capacity for Enjoyment, or thoſe acquired ill Qualities, which muſt render Happineſs impoſſible; that this future Life, and this Power, inveſted in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to be the Saviour of Men and their Judge, were demonſtrated even to the Senſes of a great Multitude, by the Reſurrection of our bleſſed Lord, and his viſible Aſcenſion into Heaven; that God has, through the Mediation of Chriſt, granted the Remiſſion

of paſt Sins, to all thoſe, who ſincerely repent and reform, and comply with the holy Rules of the Goſpel; that the Method appointed by Chriſt, for the Salvation of Mankind, was the ſame divine Life which he lived himſelf, as far as the moral Powers of the human Nature are capable of imitating it, and which he has particularly recommended by his own Inſtructions, and thoſe of his Apoſtles, in the Goſpel Precepts of Righteouſneſs, Charity, Humility, Sincerity, Self-government, or a due Moderation of ſenſual and earthly Deſires; a conſtant Devotion of the Heart towards the ever bleſſed God, and a continual Regard to his Approbation; honouring his great Perfections by an Endeavour to imitate them, truſting in him, praying to him, entertaining the moſt grateful Senſe of his Goodneſs, being reconciled to all his Appointments, and preferring him in our Affections as our higheſt Good. The Arguments and Motives, by which theſe Inſtructions are urged and enforced, are Gratitude to God and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; the Holineſs of the ſupreme Being, and his Perfections; the Example of Chriſt; the Aſſiſtances God has favoured us with, to promote our Improvement in the Chriſtian Temper; and laſtly, our own Intereſt, and the Happineſs of others, depending upon this Conformity of our Conduct

duct to the Wiſdom of God; our Self-enjoyment, and inward Satisfaction in this World; our being owned by Chriſt as his Servants, at his Coming, or our being rejected by him; or, our Happineſs and Miſery in another Life, which depend upon our Improvement in theſe Excellencies, or Neglect of them at preſent.

Theſe were the chief Inſtructions, delivered by our Lord and his Apoſtles; who proved the Truth of what they taught, ſhewed their Commiſſion to teach theſe Things to be from God, and that they had the Authority of Heaven for what they ſaid, by the miraculous Powers with which they were inveſted. This was God's own Atteſtation of the Truth of Chriſtianity; and there were living Witneſſes of the Life, Miracles, and Reſurrection of Chriſt to appeal to. Notwithſtanding all theſe divine Proofs of an Authority from God, St. Paul did not require an implicit Faith in all he ſaid, without *reaſoning* from the Evidence, with which the Providence of God had favoured the World, and rendring it concluſive by *Arguments*; which is his conſtant Manner, in Imitation of his great Maſter, to render the Doctrines of Religion as clear as poſſible to the Minds of Men, by ſhewing the Reaſonableneſs of what he propoſes. And this is

the

of paſt Sins, to all thoſe, who ſincerely repent and reform, and comply with the holy Rules of the Goſpel; that the Method appointed by Chriſt, for the Salvation of Mankind, was the ſame divine Life which he lived himſelf, as far as the moral Powers of the human Nature are capable of imitating it, and which he has particularly recommended by his own Inſtructions, and thoſe of his Apoſtles, in the Goſpel Precepts of Righteouſneſs, Charity, Humility, Sincerity, Self-government, or a due Moderation of ſenſual and earthly Deſires; a conſtant Devotion of the Heart towards the ever bleſſed God, and a continual Regard to his Approbation; honouring his great Perfections by an Endeavour to imitate them, truſting in him, praying to him, entertaining the moſt grateful Senſe of his Goodneſs, being reconciled to all his Appointments, and preferring him in our Affections as our higheſt Good. The Arguments and Motives, by which theſe Inſtructions are urged and enforced, are Gratitude to God and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; the Holineſs of the ſupreme Being, and his Perfections; the Example of Chriſt; the Aſſiſtances God has favoured us with, to promote our Improvement in the Chriſtian Temper; and laſtly, our own Intereſt, and the Happineſs of others, depending upon this Conformity of our Conduct

duct to the Wiſdom of God; our Self-enjoyment, and inward Satisfaction in this World; our being owned by Chriſt as his Servants, at his Coming, or our being rejected by him; or, our Happineſs and Miſery in another Life, which depend upon our Improvement in theſe Excellencies, or Neglect of them at preſent.

Theſe were the chief Inſtructions, delivered by our Lord and his Apoſtles; who proved the Truth of what they taught, ſhewed their Commiſſion to teach theſe Things to be from God, and that they had the Authority of Heaven for what they ſaid, by the miraculous Powers with which they were inveſted. This was God's own Atteſtation of the Truth of Chriſtianity; and there were living Witneſſes of the Life, Miracles, and Reſurrection of Chriſt to appeal to. Notwithſtanding all theſe divine Proofs of an Authority from God, St. Paul did not require an implicit Faith in all he ſaid, without *reaſoning* from the Evidence, with which the Providence of God had favoured the World, and rendring it concluſive by *Arguments*; which is his conſtant Manner, in Imitation of his great Maſter, to render the Doctrines of Religion as clear as poſſible to the Minds of Men, by ſhewing the Reaſonableneſs of what he propoſes. And this is

the

the Work of thoſe, who would teach Chriſtianity to the World. They muſt gather up the ſame Inſtructions that Chriſt and his Apoſtles have left them; and to the Evidence, which God has given the World by his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and by the Holy Ghoſt, add the ſtrongeſt and the plaineſt Reaſonings, both to eſtabliſh the Doctrines, that appear to them with the Characters of Truth, and to confute the Arguments of the Enemies of Religion, and *convince Gainſayers:* For Chriſtianity is, in all its Doctrines, a rational Thing, and very capable of being maintained by Reaſon. And this will further appear, if we conſider,

2. The Character the Apoſtle gives of the Doctrine he taught. It is *Wiſdom. Teaching every Man in all Wiſdom.* Some think this expreſſes the Manner in which the Apoſtle executed his Office, as a *Preacher of Chriſt.* But it ſeems rather to denote the Excellence of the Doctrines themſelves. However, we ſhall conſider both diſtinctly.

(1.) The Excellency of the Doctrine St. Paul taught. It was *Wiſdom.* Chriſtianity is Wiſdom; a rational conſiſtent Scheme, fully anſwering the Deſign of it, which was to make Men like God, and

qualify

qualify them for the Felicities of Heaven. Such are the Commands of God and the Temper of Chriſtianity.——And while our Religion is calculated for Eternity, and to ſerve the Intereſts of Heaven, it is exceedingly well adapted to our preſent Condition in this World, while we are converſing with Men like ourſelves. It leads us to the moſt valuable Good we can enjoy; as it produceth that Conſciouſneſs, which is neceſſary to our partaking of the Glorious Rewards of a future Life, together with ſuch Habits of Virtue, acquired by following theſe holy Directions, as exalt us above the groſſer Affections of a corporeal and earthly State, and are the peculiar Qualities of a Spiritual Nature, by which the Mind becomes fit for a moſt refined Happineſs in a better World. It leads us, by Devotion, Contentment, ſocial Virtue, a juſt Regulation of our Paſſions, the moſt excellent Decorum in Life, Satisfaction in the Appointments of Heaven, and the Expectation of a more perfect Felicity, to the beſt Enjoyment of the preſent Life, and the greateſt Fortitude under the moſt adverſe Circumſtances, and the heavieſt Calamities. In ſhort it makes us a Happineſs to ourſelves and the World about us, and ſecures to us everlaſting Felicity.——This is the Doctrine of the Goſpel; plain and intelligible,

intelligible; and ſuch as the Reaſon of Man may ſufficiently comprehend for all preſent or future Purpoſes. It does not conſiſt of Injunctions too difficult to be complied with; is not a Burden, but a Pleaſure of the moſt ſublime Kind; is not delivered in dark Ænigma's, and obſcure Figures; but with the greateſt Plainneſs; ſo that a Man need not be a great Scholar, to be a good Chriſtian: Yet, as Knowledge is a very ſuitable Pleaſure to rational Minds, the further we extend our Inquiries, the more copious ſhall we find that ſatisfying Pleaſure, which ariſes from an Acquaintance with Religion and moral Subjects.

(2.) I ſhall conſider this Wiſdom, as the Manner, in which the Doctrines of the Goſpel are to be propoſed to Men. *Teaching every Man in all Wiſdom.*

It will be allow'd, that Modeſty and Diſcretion belong to that Wiſdom, according to which Men ſhould converſe with one another about the Doctrines of Religion, either in publick or private. An inſpired Apoſtle thought an aſſuming Air would not be tolerable in *himſelf*; and much leſs can it be ſo in any of *us*. This we learn from what he ſays of himſelf to the Corinthians. *Now I Paul myſelf*

ii, Cor x. i.

ſelf beſeech you, by the Meekneſs and Gentleneſs of Chriſt; who in Preſence am, tapeinos, baſe *among you*; that is, humble, lowly, meek, gentle, affable; *but being abſent am bold towards you.* He refers to his former prudent Conduct, when he abode ſo long at Corinth. A Clerical Dictating, pronouncing with the Air and Authority of a Pope, is no proper Method of inculcating the Truths of Religion upon the Minds of Men. They are Addreſſes to the Reaſon of Mankind, and not deſigned to be obtruded upon Perſons without being underſtood, nor to irritate and provoke reſenting Paſſions. The Privilege of Reaſon is common to all the World; and therefore great Deference ought to be paid to it in others, as well as ourſelves.—— No Man's Reaſonings deſerve Reproach. Therefore Religious Subjects ſhould always be treated with Mildneſs; and contrary Sentiments find the Candour in our Breaſts, which is due to the Reaſoning of Mankind. We may be ſure, in thoſe Things which are controverted among Men, either the Affirmative or the Negative is the Truth: But, tho' we may *contend earneſtly* for what appears to us to be ſo, if it be neceſſary, or convenient; we ought to conſider, whether we are likely to do Good or Hurt by oppoſing the Sentiments of others, when they differ from us: And, ſince few controverted

troverted Opinions are of much Moment in Chriſtianity, a Miniſter moſt commonly has the Liberty to forbear giving Diſguſt by entering into an unprofitable Subject, and to confine himſelf to thoſe moſt uſeful Points which contain the *chief*, if not the *only* Doctrines of Chriſtianity; which all, in a Manner, are agreed in: And if it ſhould be found proper, to engage upon *other* Subjects; to do it with the Temper and good Manners of a Gentleman, and the Charity of a Chriſtian.

Again, it is Prudence and *Wiſdom*, to propoſe the Doctrines of Religion to others in the *plaineſt* Manner, and to give as ſatisfactory an Account of them, as poſſible. Men may perplex and intangle the cleareſt and the plaineſt Doctrines. And indeed this Injury has Religion long been expos'd to. To many of the earlier Fathers of the Church almoſt all was Myſtery; and they weakly fancied, that it belonged to the *Majeſty* of the Chriſtian Religion, to be obcure; and therefore ſeemed to endeavour to render it ſo as much as poſſible, by turning every Thing into Allegory, and cauſing the moſt wonderful Doctrines to ſtart up out of the plaineſt Narratives of Scripture, where no ſuch meaning could have been traced out by *meer Reaſon* and *Common-Senſe*. The following Ages em-

belliſhed an obſcure Religion with multiplied Legends, Improvements in a pompous Worſhip, and new Doctrines, fenced from the Underſtandings of Men with perplexing Diſtinctions, and dark Terms, ſuitable to the Ignorance of thoſe Times.—— Ignorance, always diverted and amuſed with Show and Wonder! Many of theſe Things were retained at the *Reformation*; and ſince that Time have been too much uſed; till it was at laſt perceived, that God *deſigned* Religion to be *underſtood*; and that it has nothing to do but with our Underſtandings, our Tempers, and our Morals. And if this be the Light *we* admire it in, let us repreſent it to *others* in the ſame Light; as a Help, and not a Clog to their Reaſon——But we ſhall never do this by the Methods which many of the Antients took to keep up the *Ignorance* of Men, and thereby an idolatrous Veneration for the Clergy. Let us call Things by Names that may beſt make them known; and never ſpeak of *Grace*, and *Faith*, the *Church*, the *Saints*, the *Elect*, &c. without a juſt Meaning; nor quote Scripture by the *Sound of Words*, without regard to its original Deſign, and it's true Senſe. Let us not talk of the *Spirit*, *ſupernatural Principles*, the *Corruption of Nature*, *Regeneration*, *Juſtification*, the *Pardon of Sin*, *Imputation*, *Satisfaction*, a *State of*

Grace, Merits, future Rewards and Punishments, the *Condition of the Children of ungodly Parents dying in Infancy, or unbaptized, Mysteries, Sacraments*, &c. without being fully satisfied that we understand *ourselves*, and the *plainest* Proofs of what we assert for the Satisfaction of *others*. *Ministers* should advance nothing without Proof, and to refer to Scripture is no Confirmation of any Doctrine, unless we can make it appear, that the Scripture does assert it——But we are to expect nothing unreasonable from the Scriptures.

Lastly, *decent Expressions*, and some *Elegance* of Composure, belong to the Wisdom with which *Christ* is to be *preached*: And a polite Age should not be drawn into Prejudices against Religion by the Roughness and Folly of it's Defenders. When St. Paul tells us, that he preached the Gospel *not with the Wisdom of Words*; nor with inticing Words of Man's Wisdom; he does not mean, that he used a rustic, unpolished Stile, and the most awkward Words and rude Comparisons he could meet with, or invent. He no where talks foolishly himself: No ridiculous Sentence can be found in all his Epistles; neither does he recommend it to others, to render the Word of God contemptible by handling it uncorrectly: On the contrary, He gives

1. Cor. i. xvii.
1. Cor. ii. xiv.

this

this Advice to Timothy: *Study to ſhew thyſelf approved unto God, a Workman that needeth not to be aſhamed*, i. e. before Men; *rightly dividing the Word of Truth.* Miniſters are commonly well educated; and a polite Education ſhould produce Fruits worthy of itſelf——If any Thing deſerves fine Things to be ſaid of it, it is Religion. Juſt Expreſſion is very conſiſtent with Plainneſs and Reaſoning; and the more this is obſerved, the leſs will Religion be expoſed to the Contempt of it's Enemies. I am now in the ii. Tim. ii. xv.

III. Place, to conſider the great *End*, which ſhould be always obſerved in publiſhing this *Wiſdom* to the World. *That we may preſent every Man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus.* That is, preſent them unto God, an Offering acceptable to Him; as he ſays of the Gentiles in another Place. *That I ſhould be the Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt to the Gentiles, miniſtring the Goſpel of God, that the Offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt.* To bring Men to God, and *preſent* them to Him, is to bring them to Salvation; to make them by the Inſtructions of the Goſpel like God, and ſuch as He will approve and accept. It is the Work of Miniſters, to be thus uſeful to the World; that they may be able to give a good Account of their Rom. xv. 16.

Faithfulneſs in the Service of God, by producing theſe *Seals* of their Miniſtry, as St. Paul tells the Corinthians. *The Seal of mine Apoſtleſhip are ye in the Lord.* Here I ſhall conſider

i. Cor. ix. 2.

In what this Perfection conſiſts, which it was the Apoſtle's Deſire to bring thoſe to, whom he inſtructed in the Doctrines of Chriſtianity; and

What may be implied in his uſing the Words, *every Man*, which He repeats ſo often in this Verſe; to ſhew the extenſive Deſign he had in all his Labours.

1. Wherein that *Perfection* conſiſts, which it was the great End of St. Paul's preaching to bring Men to. To *preſent every Man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus.* After what has been ſaid of the Apoſtle's Meaning in *preaching Chriſt*, I need not uſe more Words, to ſhew that the ſame Thing is intended here; *viz.* the Doctrines of the Chriſtian Religion; to render Men perfect in Chriſtianity. And this muſt imply, that by the plain preaching of all the important Doctrines of Religion, he fully inſtructed them in the Chriſtian Faith, in the Knowledge of God and his Will, and made them to underſtand Chriſtianity. This is the *End* of a ſtanding Miniſtry in the World; the *End* all Miniſters ſhould propoſe

propoſe to themſelves ; to make Men fully acquainted with the Goſpel of Chriſt.

I have already ſaid, that controverted Points are not always profitable Subjects to entertain an Aſſembly of Chriſtians with. They are Points more fit for the *Preſs* than the *Pulpit* ; and require the Pens of the ableſt Hands to manage, and the Leiſure of the Cloſet, with larger Abilities, than the moſt of Men are furniſhed with, to peruſe, and judge of. And here I would take Notice, that it deſerves our Conſideration, whether the Religion of Jeſus, in it's Original Simplicity, does not all of it lie in ſo manageable a Compaſs, as to exclude moſt of thoſe Controverſial Subjects? And I would put this Query ; whether he that is adorned with all the Excellencies of a Chriſtian Spirit, and has attained whatever the Goſpel requires of the Candidates for Heaven, be not *perfect in Chriſt Jeſus?* I am ready to think, he that has learnt to live, as his Saviour lived, and to *do the Will of God on Earth*, as the Bleſſed do it *in Heaven*, knows enough, to ſecure his Intereſt in that happy World ; having embraced *the whole Counſel of God*, and *having his Law written on his Heart*. This then ſhould be the *End* of Miniſters in their preaching ; to addreſs the Doctrines and Motives of Chriſtianity ſo to their

Hearers

Hearers, that they may underſtand and feel the Evidence of Religion, and be brought under the Influence of it, which is their *Perfection.*

2. The extenſive Deſign the Apoſtle had in *preaching Chriſt* to the World, appears from his uſing the Words *every Man*; putting an Emphaſis upon them by repeating them three times in this Verſe. *Warning* every Man, *and teaching* every Man *in all Wiſdom, that we may preſent* every Man *perfect in Chriſt Jeſus.* The Apoſtle had two ſorts of Perſons to deal with; the *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and he *made himſelf Servant to all, that he might*
1. Cor. IX. 20. *gain the more. Unto the Jews,* ſays he, *I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the Law, as under the Law, that I might gain*
ver. 21. *them that are under the Law; to them that are without Law, as without Law, that I might gain them that are without*
ver. 22. *Law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all Men, that I might by all means ſave ſome.* That is, he behaved himſelf in a ſuitable manner to all Sorts of Perſons, and adapted his Inſtructions to them; and ſo ſhould all the Miniſters of Chriſt.

Firſt,

Firſt, to the different *Capacities* of their Hearers. Poor, hard-working People, with large Families, and, it may be, in ſtraitned Circumſtances, have all their Time and Leiſure diſpoſed of by Providence in the Buſineſs of their Callings; and ſo want Opportunities for much Reading, and to qualify themſelves for the Underſtanding of many ſpeculative Points, and Subjects of a more abſtracted Nature; and therefore every thing muſt be couched in the plaineſt Language, and delivered in the eaſieſt manner for them.

Again, there are in many Congregations Perſons of Ability and Parts; whoſe Judgment and Skill in the moſt difficult, and eſpecially the moſt important Subjects, ought to be reſpected, and their Preſence conſidered by the Speaker; as very unfit to be ſlighted; which it muſt be, if that, which is propoſed, be not worthy of their Attention. It may be, ſome of our *Hearers* are ſuperior to *ourſelves* in Learning, in reaſoning and judging of Religion; and ſurely, it becomes the Modeſty and Humility of a Miniſter of Chriſt, to avoid being *magiſterial* at all times, but eſpecially before *ſuch Men*. Though he be confined to *Plainneſs*, for the ſake of the greater Number; and cannot undertake to *teach* thoſe, who are, at leaſt, as ſkilful

as

as himſelf; he may endeavour to entertain them with well-ſtudied Compoſures upon the beſt Subjects: And, if Plainneſs be ſtudied, moſt Subjects will bear it. And it is the Advantage of Mankind, that one Property, belonging to the Elegancy of Diſcourſe, is it's Plainneſs.

Secondly, we muſt accommodate ourſelves to the various Prejudices of *Men*. They are too ſtubborn things to be forced by the Violence of Debate; and will be confirmed by Affronts and direct Oppoſition: Yet they muſt not be neglected. Prudence and Forbearance will ſoften them, while Reaſon and Argument, not directly levelled againſt them, but aiming, as it were, at ſomething elſe, by Degrees will wear them out. Heat and violent Paſſions, eſpecially where Religion is concerned, are never conquer'd by more Heat, in a direct Oppoſition. We muſt know how to bear the Contradictions of Men, and be ourſelves gentle and peaceable, if we would be ſucceſsful in our Work of inſtructing the World.

Laſtly, we are to conſider the great Variety in Men's *Moral* Characters, and accommodate ourſelves to every one of them, as they become known to us. It is of the greateſt Moment, to be acquaint-

ed

ed with the Temper and Converſation of thoſe we addreſs ourſelves to, to encourage the pious and good, to perſevere in a virtuous Courſe of Life, and to treat the vicious and immoral in ſuch a Manner, as is moſt likely to prevail on them to reform a diſorderly Life, and correct a bad Temper; according to that Advice of St. Jude: *Of* ſome *have Compaſſion, making a Difference: And* others *ſave with fear, pulling them out of the Fire.* ver. 22, 23.

Having now finiſhed what I propoſed doctrinally from the Text, I would in the

IV. And laſt Place, conclude all with a few Inferences from what has been ſaid, in an Application of it to our own Hearts, whether Preachers, or others. And

I. Is it the Buſineſs of Miniſters to *preach Chriſt?* And in *preaching Chriſt*, to declare the Doctrines of Religion, and maintain them to the World? I would infer the Diligence and Application, requiſite in thoſe, who are thus employed under the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Attention due to their Miniſtrations from all that frequent our Aſſemblies.——It is *Chriſt Jeſus* we *preach*; the Religion inſtituted by him for the Salvation of Men. It is in his Name, by his Authority, and as his Servants, that we are engaged in this

Work——Let us account it our Honour, and ſtrenuouſly proceed in it. We are in an Eminent manner *ſet for the Defence of the Goſpel* of Chriſt, and the times at preſent call upon us, to exert ourſelves, to plead the Cauſe of Religion againſt many Enemies.——But, when we undertake the Defence of it, let us be careful, that we do not expoſe it by the weakneſs of our Arguments, or the Diſagreement of our Lives and Tempers with it's holy Rules. Let our Labours be, as much as poſſible, calculated for the Benefit of Men; and to this End, let us endeavour to ſtir up the Attention of our Hearers by the moſt affecting and convincing Reaſoning: Many of our Hearers are not otherwiſe to be moved; but may be expected to trifle away all the time we are ſpeaking to them, in Sleep, or thinking of other Affairs, while they imagine we are ſaying *Nothing*, or *nothing to the Purpoſe*, becauſe our Diſcourſe is not enlivened, and our Arguments forcible enough to affect the hardeſt Hearts——And, I fear, we preach to many ſuch. But, let our Hearers conſider, it is *Chriſt Jeſus the Lord* we preach, and *his* Inſtructions we deliver.——The weighty Truths of Chriſtianity, which do indeed *deſerve* their Attention: For they are the ſame Things, that *Chriſt* himſelf taught his Diſciples. They will own, they

ſhould

ſhould rejoice to hear them from *Chriſt*; and why not from *thoſe* who have received them from him.

2. Is it *Wiſdom*, that the Miniſters of Chriſt propoſe to the World? Let them preſerve their Character as *Wiſe-men*; that the World may not treat them with Contempt, as Perſons of no Account in it. We have heard much of the *Contempt of the Clergy*.—Is it true? or but a falſe Report, that we have heard? How can thoſe be deſpiſed, who propoſe to Men nothing, but what is *reaſonable*, teach the higheſt *Wiſdom*, and *themſelves* practice the ſame Rules, which they recommend to others? *Wiſdom* is venerable every where, and I cannot but think it is as much reſpected in the *Clergy*, as in *others*. I believe, ſo far, as we maintain nothing contrary to Good-ſenſe, and the Reaſon of Mankind, we have, few of us, any Cauſe to complain; eſpecially if we practice our own Rules: But, if the Clergy expect from the World, now grown much wiſer, the ſame crouching Submiſſions, blind Obedience, and idolatrous Worſhip, as when they lorded it with a deſpotic Tyranny over the Conſciences of the poor, deſpiſed *Laity*; they are much miſtaken. People aſſert their Liberty to judge for themſelves: And their Brethren ſhould be con-

tent to allow them to be *Men*, and *rational Beings*, as well as they. There are *three things*, which, above all, do not *deſerve*, nor muſt expect to find Reſpect in a Miniſter of Chriſt, viz. *a bad Life, Clerical Pride, and Enthuſiaſm*; to which I might add it's conſtant Attendant, Superſtition ——All theſe are contrary to the Religion of Chriſt, the Reaſon of Mankind, and the *Wiſdom* we profeſs to teach.

I need not exhort our *Fellow-Chriſtians*, to give us the Reſpect due to us: For this, I think, is an Obligation upon us, to love and eſteem *them*; that they are ſeldom backward in the Duties of Love to *us*, unleſs it be, when they are ſtirred up againſt us by the blind Zeal of an *Enthuſiaſtick Spirit*, which is too often encouraged by *Falſe Brethren* among ourſelves; that is, thoſe, who profeſs to be the *Miniſters of Chriſt*, but by ſuch a Conduct ſadly *betray* their Maſter's *Intereſts*. This leads me to a

Third Inference, with which I ſhall conclude. Should it be the *End* of all our Labours, to *preſent every one perfect in Chriſt Jeſus?* This ſhews us, my worthy Brethren, how much *the Love of Mankind* ſhould abound in our Hearts. See, how St. Paul declares his Affections

to

to *all* Men! Read it in every Epiſtle.—*There* is an Example for us! Let us warm our Hearts with a Concern for the immortal Intereſts of Men, and teach *them* the ſame Chriſtian Affection; and this will animate both ourſelves and them, to unite in the ſame Work of promoting the Intereſts of Religion in the World with the moſt publick Spirit; and this will be followed, it is to be hoped, with a Succeſs, that ſhall render our Labours exceeding pleaſant to us.

Let us eſpecially remember the Harmony and Friendſhip, that Miniſters ſhould always maintain towards one another. Let us not, by Jealouſies, Surmiſes, and unfair Repreſentations of one another, and the Way we take, to *preach Chriſt*, and recommend Religion to the World, weaken one another's Hands, and diſcourage thoſe Labours, which are well intended, for *the perfecting every Man in Chriſt Jeſus*. For, let us conſider, *we preach not ourſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, and ourſelves the Servants* of Mankind *for Jeſus ſake, to whom be Glory for ever, Amen.*

F I N I S.

Lately publiſhed by *R. Whitworth*, Bookſeller, oppoſite that Corner of the *Exchange* next the CROSS,

I.

NATIONAL Gratitude a juſt Tribute for National Deliverances; exemplify'd in the Diſcovery of the *Powder-Plot*, and Acceſſion of the *Prince of Orange* to the Throne. A Sermon Preach'd to a Society of Proteſtant Diſſenters, at *Rochdale*, *Nov.* 5. 1742.

Publiſh'd by Deſire; as a Teſtimony of Zeal for the Civil and Religious Liberties of Mankind, and the Intereſt of the *Hanover Succeſſion*.

By *J. OWEN.*

II.

By the ſame Author,

The Song of *Deborah*, apply'd to the Battle of *Dettingen*. A Thankſgiving Sermon on the Occaſion of the late glorious Victory obtain'd by the *Allied Army* over the *French*. Preach'd *Auguſt* the 1ſt.

III.

THE Danger of the Church and Kingdom from *Foreigners*; conſier'd in ſeveral Articles of high Importance. The Third EDITION. Interſpers'd, with Variety of entertaining Enlargements; as alſo a ſhort Account

Account of the Spirituality, and it's *Retinentia.*

At R. Whitworth's *aforeſaid may be had, and at no other Place in* Mancheſter, *therefore take care not to miſs the* Shop;

THE ſame, and the Sort only, of *DAFFY*'s *ELIXIR*, which has been ſold in the Family near thirty Years; which many have endeavoured to procure, but being diſappointed, all Arts have been uſed to leſſen the Credit of it, tho' it is ſo firmly eſtabliſhed by it's Repute in the beſt Families, and the great Succeſs that attends it, as, it's hoped, will prevent any Hazard being run by buying elſewhere: Alſo Dr. *Anderſon*'s *Scots* Pills, Advertiſed in the Gazette: *Stevenſon*'s *Scots* Pills, in round Boxes: Dr. *Bateman*'s Pectoral Drops, which work by Sweat only: A Bottle for the Itch, of a very clean Nature, which cures by thrice waſhing, at 1 s. *Stoughton*'s Elixir, for all Ailments of the Stomach, languiſhing or lowneſs of Spirit: Dr. *Godfrey*'s Cordial for breeding Women, weakly and reſtleſs Children &c. Golden Spirits of Scurvy Graſs, for purging: A Bottle for the *Tooth-Ach*, and one for *preſerving* the *Teeth*; Alſo Wholeſale, and Retale, as cheap as in *London.*

All Sorts of Houſe Bibles and other Sorts, Common Prayer Books with N. Teſtament,

Cuts,

Cuts, Companion to the Altar, all Sorts of Paper and Pocket Books, Writing Paper by the Ream, ſome Sorts cheaper than in London, Copy Books to write after, Slates, Pencils, Rul'd Paper for Muſick and Weavers, Sealing Wax, Wafers, Maps, Pictures &c. and all Sorts of Printing Work for Juſtices Clerks &c. done neatly and correctly.

BRITISH
29 NO 30
MUSEUM